

ABSTRACT

An elongated first tubular member has a mandrel receiving center passageway and a slotted outer end portion that comprises first axial fingers separated by first axial slots. An elongated second tubular member surrounds the first tubular member and has a slotted outer end portion that comprises second axial fingers separated by second axial slots. An elongated third tubular member surrounds the second tubular member and has a slotted outer end portion comprising third axial fingers separated by third axial slots. An elongated mandrel is positioned inside the center passageway. The mandrel has a small diameter inner end portion, a large diameter outer end portion, and an increasing diameter portion extending from the small diameter inner end portion to the large diameter outer end portion. The third fingers have outer end portions that form an end opening. These fingers include radially inwardly projecting clamp jaws having substantially radial first clamp surfaces. The first clamp fingers include outer end portions having substantially radial second clamp surfaces which confront the first clamp surfaces. The first tubular member is extendable and retractable longitudinally of the second and third tubular members. The first and second tubular members have first and second cam surfaces. The first cam surfaces are radially outwardly directed on the first axial fingers and the second cam surfaces are radially inwardly directed on the second axial fingers. The first and second cam surfaces are adapted to contact each other and expand the second axial fingers radially in response to the first tubular member being retracted into the second tubular member. This expansion of the second axial fingers is adapted to cause an expansion of the third axial fingers and an enlargement of the end opening formed by the axial fingers of the third tubular member.

A tubular sleeve is provided that has an inner end and a flange projecting radially outwardly from the sleeve at the inner end. This flange is sized to move axially through the end opening in the outer end of the third tubular member when the third axial fingers are expanded. The flange is also sized to be received between and be clamped by the first and second clamp surfaces when the first tubular member is extended axially and the second and third axial fingers are contracted radially. The tubular sleeve has a tubular portion that extends axially from the flange and the end opening when the flange is clamped by and between the first and second clamp surfaces. The mandrel is extendable axially through the center passageway of the first tubular member and axially through the tubular sleeve when the radial flange is clamped by and between the first and second clamp surfaces. The mandrel is retractable through the sleeve and into the center passageway when the radial flange is clamped by and between the first and second clamp surfaces.